

THE
JUDGMENT of HERCULES,

A
P O E M.

John Hamilton Junior

1775
By a STUDENT of Oxford.

To which is subjoined

The GOLDEN VERSES of PYTHAGORAS.

Translated from the Greek by Mr. ROWE.

G L A S G O W,

Printed and sold by ROBERT FOULIS.

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JUDGMENT & REVEREND



STUDENT OF

The Golden Vase of

Translated from the Greek by Mr. R.

C. E. & C. W.

Printed and sold by R.

M. D. C. XII.

1857

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In
Or,
For
The

THE
JUDGMENT of HERCULES.

I.

NOW had the Son of Jove, mature, attain'd
The joyful prime, when youth elate and gay
Steps into life, and follows unrestrain'd

Where passion drives, or prudence points the way.
In the pure mind, at those unsteady years,
Or vice, rank weed, strikes deep her pois'rous root;
Or, haply, virtue's op'ning bud appears,

By just degrees, fair bloom of fairest fruit:
For if on Youth's untainted thought imprest,
The generous purpose still shall warm the manly breast.

A

As

The JUDGMENT of HERCULES.

II.

As on a day, reflecting on his age
For highest deeds now ripe, Alcides fought
Retirement, nurse of contemplation sage ;
Step following step, and thought succeeding thought ;
Musing with steady pace, the Youth pursu'd
His walk, and, lost in meditation, stray'd,
Far in a lonely vale, with solitude
Conversing ; while intent his mind survey'd
The dubious path of life ; before him lay
Here Virtue's rough ascent, there Pleasure's slipp'ry way ;

III.

Much did the thought his wav'ring mind divide ;
Ambition now inflam'd his gen'rous breast ;
Now indolence persuasion soft apply'd,
Gently to lull his throbbing heart to rest :
When lo ! far off two female forms he spies ;
Direct to him their steps they seem to bear ;
Both large and tall, exceeding human size ;
Both far exceeding human beauty fair.
Graceful, yet each with different grace, they move ;
This, striking sacred awe ; That, softer winning love.

IV. The

The JUDGMENT of HERCULES

IV.

The first in native dignity excell'd;
Artless and unadorn'd she pleas'd the more;
With comely state th' imperial sword she held;
A vest more white than new-fall'n snow she wore;
August she trode, yet modest was her air;
Beauty and terror mingled in her eye;
Still she drew near, and nearer seem'd more fair,
Fair as the morn unfolds the cloudless sky;
Awfully gay, as glitt'ring hosts appear,
Majestically sweet, and amiably severe.

V.

The other dame seem'd even of fairer hue;
But with bold gaze, she fixt her wanton eye;
And her flush'd cheeks confess'd, at nearer view,
The borrow'd blushes of the vermil dye:
Pamper'd and soft she danc'd with airy swim,
Lightly along: her artful robe display'd
Thro' the clear texture ev'ry tender limb,
Height'ning the charms it only seem'd to shade;
And as it flow'd adown so loose and thin,
Her stature seem'd more tall, more snowy white her skin.

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VI.

Oft with a fmile ſhe view'd herſelf aſkance;
Oft on her ſhade a conſcious look ſhe threw;
Then all around her caſt a careleſs glance,
To mark what gazing eyes her beauty drew.
As they came near, before the other dame,
Approaching decent, eagerly ſhe preſt,
Not of repulſe afraid, and void of ſhame,
Ran to the Youth, and with a kiſs addreſs'd;
With winning fondneſs on his neck ſhe hung,
Sweet as the honey-dew flow'd her enchanting tongue.

VII.

My Hercules, whence this unkind delay,
Dear Youth, what doubts can thus diſtract thy mind?
Securely follow, where I lead the way,
And range thro' wilds of pleaſure unconfin'd.
With me retire from noiſe, and pain, and care,
Embath'd in bliſs, and wrapt in endleſs eaſe:
Rough is the road to Fame, thro' blood and war;
Smooth is my way, and all my paths are peace.
With me retire, from toils and perils free:
Leave honor to the wretch. Pleaſures were made for thee.

VIII Then

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VIII.

Then will I grant thee all thy soul's desire;

All that may charm thine ear, and please thy sight;

All that thy thought can frame, or wish require,

To sleep thy ravish'd senses in delight.

The sumptuous feast, enhanc'd with musick's sound,

Fittest to tune the melting soul to love;

Rich odors breathing choicest sweets around,

The fragrant bow'r, cool fountains, shady grove,

Flow'rs to bedeck thy couch, and crown thy head;

Joy shall attend thy steps, and ease shall smooth thy bed.

IX.

My hands shall wipe all sorrow from thine eye;

Thy breast no more shall heave with rising woe;

Far from thy rest repining want shall fly,

Nor labor bath in sweat thy careful brow:

Mature the copious harvest shall be thine,

Let the laborious hind subdue the soil;

Leave the rash soldier spoils of war to win;

Won by the soldier thou shalt share the spoil.

These softer cares my blest allies employ,

New pleasures to invent, to wish, and to enjoy.

X. Here

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XI

Her winning voice the Youth attentive taught:
 He gaz'd impatient on the smiling maid,
 Still gaz'd and listen'd, then her name besought:
 My name, fair Youth, his Happiness, she said:
 Well can my friends this envied truth maintain:
 They share my bliss, they best can speak my praise:
 Tho' slander calls me sloth, Detraction vain
 Heed not what slander, vain detractor, says:
 Slander for ever studious to defame,
 And blot the brightest worth, and blast the fairest name.

XII

When now arriv'd the fair majestic maid,
 (She all the while with the same modest pace
 Compos'd advanc'd) Know, Hercules, she said,
 With manly tone, Thy birth of heav'nly race,
 Thy tender age that lov'd instruction's voice,
 Promis'd thee gen'rous, patient, brave, and wise,
 When manhood should confirm thy glorious choice,
 Now expectation waits to see thee rise,
 And climb aloft to Fame: Rise, Youth, approve
 Thine high descent, and dare be worthy Jove.

XII. But

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XII.

But what truth prompts, my tongue shall not disguise;
The steep ascent with sweat must be subdu'd;
Labor and cares must win the lofty prize,
Propos'd by Heav'n, true bliss and real good.
Honor rewards the brave and bold alone,
She spurs the tim'rous, indolent, and base;
Danger and toil stand stern before her throne,
And guard, so Jove commands, the blissful place.
Who seeks her must the mighty cost sustain,
And pay the price of Fame; labor, and care, and pain.

XIII.

Would'st thou engage the God's peculiar care
O Hercules! th' IMMORTAL Pow'rs adore
With a pure heart, with sacrifice and pray'r
Attend their altars, and their aid implore.
Or would'st thou gain thy country's loud applause,
Lov'd as her Father, as her God ador'd;
Be thou the bold asserter of her cause,
Her voice in council, in the fight her sword;
In peace, in war, pursue thy country's good;
For her bare thy bold breast, and pour thy generous blood.

XIV. Would'st

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XIV.

Would'st thou, to quell the proud, and lift th' oppress'd;
In arts of war and matchless strength excell;
First conquer thou thyself; to ease, to rest,
To ev'ry thought of pleasure bid farewell.
The night alternate, due to sweet repose,
In watches waste, in painful march the day;
Congeal'd amid the rig'rous winter's snows;
Fainting beneath the summer's burning ray.
Harden'd by toil, thy limbs shall boast new might;
Vigor shall brace thy arm, resistless to the fight.

XV.

Hear'st thou what monsters, then, thou must engage?
What dangers, gentle Youth, she bids thee prove?
(Abrupt says Sloth) Ill fit thy tender age
Tumults and wars; fit age for joy and love.
Turn, gentle Youth, to me, to love and joy;
To these I lead: no monsters here shall stay
Thine easy course; no cares thy peace annoy;
I lead to bliss a nearer, smoother way;
Short is my way, fair, easy, smooth, and plain:
Turn, gentle Youth, with me eternal pleasures reign.

XVI. What

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XVI.

What pleasures, vain mistaken wretch, art thine?
(Virtue with scorn reply'd) who sleep'st in ease
Insensate; whose soft limbs the toil decline
That seasons bliss, and makes enjoyment please?
Draining the copious bowl e're thirst require;
Feasting e're hunger to the Feast invite;
Whose tasteless joys anticipate desire;
Whom luxury supplies with appetite:
Yet Nature loaths, and you employ in vain
Variety and art to conquer her disdain.

XVII.

The sparkling Nectar cool'd with summer's snows;
The dainty board with choicest viands spread,
To thee are tasteless all: sincere repose
Flies from thy flow'ry couch and downy bed;
For thou art only tir'd with indolence;
Nor is thy sleep with toil and labor bought,
Th' imperfect sleep, that lulls thy languid sense
In dull oblivious interval of thought;
That kindly steals th' inactive hours away,
From the long-ling'ring space, that lengthens out the day.

B

XVIII. From

12 *The* JUDGMENT of HERCULES.

XVIII.

From bounteous Nature's inexhausted stores,
Flows the pure fountain of sincere delights;
Averse to her you waste the joyless hours,
Sleep drowns thy days, and riot rules thy nights.
Tho' born a partner of the blest abodes,
Yet deem'd unworthy thy celestial birth,
Jove hurl'd thee from the mansions of the Gods,
Cast out to dwell among the sons of earth;
Fitter abode, on earth alone disgrac'd,
By wisdom always scorn'd, and by the fool embrac'd.

XIX.

Fond wretch, that vainly weenest all delight
To gratify the sense, reserv'd for thee!
Yet the most pleasing object to the sight
Thine own fair action, never didst thou see.
Tho' lull'd with softest sounds thou liest along;
Soft musick, warbling voices, melting lays;
Ne'er didst thou hear, more sweet than sweetest song.
Charming the soul, thou ne'er didst hear thy praise;
No. To thy revels let the Fool repair;
To such go sooth thy speech, and spread thy tempting snare.

XX. Vast

The JUDGMENT of HERCULES 13

XX.

Vaſt happineſs enjoy thy gay allies!

A youth of follies, an old age of cares;

Young, yet enervate; old, yet never-wiſe;

Sloth waſtes their vigor, and their minds impairs;

Vain, idle, delicate, in thoughtleſs eaſe,

Reſerving woes for age, their prime they ſpend;

All wretched, hopeleſs in the evil days,

With labor to the verge of life they tend.

Griev'd of the preſent, of the paſt aſham'd,

They live and are deſpis'd; they die, no more are nam'd.

XXI.

But with the Gods and Godlike men I dwell;

Me, his ſupreme delight, th' Almighty Sire

Regards well pleas'd; whatever works excell,

All, or divine, or human, I inſpire:

Council with ſtrength, and induſtry with art,

In union meet conjoin'd, with me reſide;

My dictates arm, inſtruct, and mend the heart,

The wiſeſt policy, the ſureſt guide.

With me true friendſhip dwells; ſhe deigns to bind

Thoſe gen'rous ſouls alone, whom I before have join'd.

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XXII.

Nor need my friends the various costly feast;
Hunger to their th' effect of art supplies;
Labor prepares their weary limbs to rest;
Sweet is their sleep; light, chearful, strong, they rise:
Thro' health, thro' joy, thro' pleasure and renown
They tread my paths, and by a soft descent
At length to age all gently sinking down,
Look back with transport on a life well spent;
In which, no hour flew unimprov'd away;
In which, some gen'rous deed distinguish'd ev'ry day.

XXIII.

And when, the destin'd term at length complete,
Their ashes rest in peace, eternal fame,
Sounds wide their praise; triumphant over Fate
In sacred song for ever lives their name.
This, Hercules, is happiness; obey
My voice; let thy celestial birth
Lift and enlarge thy thoughts; behold the way
That leads to Fame, and raises thee from earth,
Immortal; Lo! I guide thy steps; arise,
Pursue the glorious path, and claim thy native skies.

XXIV. Her

The JUDGMENT of HERCULES.

XXIV.

Her words breath fire celestial, and impart
New vigor to his soul, that sudden caught
The gen'rous flame; with great intent his heart
Swells full, and labors with exalted thought.
Purg'd from the mists of error, which before
Obscur'd his view, his eye, in clearest light,
Discerns the vail, which specious falsehood wore;
And Sloth stands now confess'd before his sight.
False Siren! all her vaunted charms that shone
So fresh e're-while and fair, now wither'd, pale and gone.

XXV.

No more the rosy bloom, in sweet disguise,
Masks her dissembled looks, each borrow'd grace
Leaves her wan cheek, pale sickness clouds her eyes
Livid and sunk; and passions dim her face.
As when fair Iris has a while display'd
Her wat'ry arch, with gaudy painture gay;
While yet we gaze, the glorious colours fade
And from our wonder gently steal away;
Where shone the gay delusion, erst so bright,
Now lowers the low-hung cloud, all gloomy to the sight.

XXVI. But

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XXVI.

But virtue more engaging, all the while
Disclos'd new charms, more lovely, more serene
Beaming sweet influence ; a milder smile
Softn'd the terrors of her lofty mien,
Lead, Goddess ! I am thine (transported cried
Alcides) O propitious pow'r, thy way
Teach me, possess my soul, be thou my guide,
From thee, O never, never let me stray !
While ardent thus the Youth his vows address'd,
With all the Goddesses fill'd, already glow'd his breast.

XXVII.

The heav'nly maid with strength divine endu'd
His daring soul ; there all her pow'rs combin'd,
Firm constancy, undaunted fortitude,
Enduring patience arm'd his mighty mind
Uumov'd in toils, in dangers undismay'd.
By many a hardy deed and bold emprise,
From fiercest monsters, by her pow'rful aid,
He free'd the earth ; thro' her he gain'd the skies.
'Twas Virtue plac'd him in the blest abode,
Crown'd with eternal youth, among the Gods a God.

F I N I S.

THE
GOLDEN VERSES
OF
PYTHAGORAS.

Translated from the Greek by Mr. ROWE.

TO THE
READER.

I Hope the Reader will forgive the liberty I have taken in translating these Verses somewhat at large, without which it would have been almost impossible to have given any kind of turn in English poetry to so dry a subject. The sense of the Author is, I hope, nowhere mistaken; and if there seems in some places to be some additions in the English verses to the Greek text, they are only such as may be justify'd from Hierocles' commentary, and delivered by him as the larger and explain'd sense of the Author's short precept. I have in some few places ventur'd to differ from the learn'd Mr. Dacier's French interpretation, as those that shall give themselves the trouble of a strict comparison will find. How far I am in the right, is left to the Reader to determine.

THE

R.

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THE
GOLDEN VERSES
OF
PYTHAGORAS.

Translated from the Greek by Mr. ROWE.

FIRST to the Gods thy humble homage pay;
The greatest this, and first of laws obey:
Perform thy vows, observe thy plighted troth,
And let religion bind thee to thy oath.
The Heroes next demand thy just regard,
Renown'd on earth, and to the stars preferr'd,
To light and endless life their virtue's sure reward.
Due rites perform and honors to the dead,

C

To

To ev'ry wife, to ev'ry pious shade.
With lowly duty to thy parents bow,
And grace and favour to thy kindred show:
For what concerns the rest of human-kind,
Chuse out the man to virtue best inclin'd;
Him to thy arms receive, him to thy bosom bind.
Possess of such a friend, preserve him still;
Nor thwart his counsels with thy stubborn will;
Pliant to all his admonitions prove,
And yield to all his offices of love:
Him, from thy heart, so true, so justly dear,
Let no rash word nor light offences tear.
Bear all thou canst, still with his failings strive
And to the utmost still, and still forgive;
For strong necessity alone explores,
The secret vigour of our latent pow'rs,
Rouses and urges on the lazy heart,
Force, to itself unknown before, t' exert.
By use thy stronger appetites assuage,
Thy gluttony, thy sloth, thy lust, thy rage:
From each dishonest act of shame forbear;
Of others, and thyself, alike beware.

Let

Let rev'rence of thyself thy thoughts controul,
 And guard the sacred temple of thy soul,
 Let justice o'er thy word and deed preside,
 And reason ev'n thy meanest actions guide:
 For know that death is man's appointed doom,
 Know that the day of great account will come,
 When thy past life shall strictly be survey'd,
 Each word, each deed be in the ballance laid,
 And all the good and all the ill most justly be repaid,
 For wealth the perishing, uncertain good,
 Ebbing and flowing like the fickle flood,
 That knows no sure, no fix'd abiding place,
 But wandering loves from hand to hand to pass;
 Revolve the getter's joy and loser's pain,
 And think if it be worth thy while to gain.
 Of all those sorrows that attend mankind,
 With patience bear the lot to thee assign'd;
 Nor think it chance, nor murmur at the load;
 For know what man calls fortune is from God,
 In what thou mayst from wisdom seek relief,
 And let her healing hand assuage the grief;

Yet still whate'er the righteous doom ordains,
 What cause soever multiplies thy pains
 Let not those pains as ills be understood
 For God delights not to afflict the good.

The reas'ning art to various ends apply'd,
 Is oft a sure, but oft an erring guide.
 Thy judgment therefore sound and cool preserve,
 Nor lightly from thy resolution swerve;
 The dazling pomp of words does oft deceive,
 And sweet persuasion wins the easy to believe.

When fools and liars labour to persuade,
 Be dumb, and let the bablers vainly plead.

This above all, this precept chiefly learn,
 This nearly does, and first thyself concern;
 Let no example, let no soothing tongue,
 Prevail upon thee with a Syren's song,
 To do thy soul's immortal essence wrong.
 Of good and ill by words or deeds express,
 Chuse for thy self, and always chuse the best.

Let

OF PYTHAGORAS.

Let wary thought each enterprize forewin,
And ponder on thy task before begun,
Lest folly should the wretched work deface,
And mock thy fruitless labours with disgrace.
Fools huddle on and always are in haste,
Act without thought, and thoughtless words they waste.
But thou in all thou dost, with early cares
Strive to prevent at first a fate like theirs;
That sorrow on the end may never wait,
Nor sharp repentance make thee wise too late.

Beware thy meddling hand in ought to try,
That does beyond thy reach of knowledge lye;
But seek to know, and bend thy serious thought
To search the profitable knowledge out.
So joys on joys for ever shall encrease,
Wisdom shall crown thy labours, and shall bless
Thy life with pleasure, and thy end with peace.

Nor let the body want its part, but share
A just proportion of thy tender care :

Let

For

For health and welfare prudently provide,
 And let its lawful wants be all supply'd;
 Let sober draughts refresh, and wholesome fare
 Decaying nature's wasted force repair;
 And sprightly exercise the duller spirits cheer.
 In all things still which to this care belong,
 Observe this rule, to guard thy soul from wrong.

By virtuous use thy life and manners frame,
 Manly and simply pure, and free from blame.

Provoke not envy's deadly rage, but fly
 The glancing curse of her malicious eye.

Seek not in needless luxury to waste
 Thy wealth and substance, with a spendthrift's haste;
 Yet flying these, be watchful, lest thy mind,
 Prone to extremes, an equal danger find,
 And be to fordid avarice inclin'd.
 Distant alike from each, to neither lean,
 But ever keep the happy GOLDEN MEAN.

Be careful still to guard thy soul from wrong,
 And let thy thought prevent thy hand and tongue.
 Let not the stealing god of sleep surprize
 Nor creep in slumbers on thy weary eyes,
 E'er ev'ry action of the former day
 Strictly thou dost and righteously survey.
 With rev'rence at thy own tribunal stand,
 And answer justly to thy own demand.
 Where have I been? In what have I transgress'd?
 What good or ill has this day's life express'd?
 Where have I fail'd in what I ought to do?
 In what to God, to man, or to myself I owe?
 Inquire severe whate'er from first to last,
 From morning's dawn 'till ev'ning's gloom is past.
 If evil were thy deeds, repenting mourn,
 And let thy soul with strong remorse be torn.
 If good, the good with peace of mind repay,
 And to thy secret self with pleasure say,
 Rejoice, my heart, for all went well to-day.

These thoughts and chiefly these thy mind should move;
 Employ thy study, and engage thy love.
 These are the rules which will to virtue lead,
 And teach thy feet her heav'nly paths to tread.
 This by his name I swear, whose sacred lore
 First to mankind explain'd the mystick **FOUR**,
 Source of eternal nature and almighty pow'r.

In all thou dost first let thy pray'rs ascend,
 And to the Gods thy labours first commend,
 From them implore success, and hope a prosp'rous end.
 So shall thy abler mind be taught to soar,
 And wisdom in her secret ways explore;
 To range thro' heav'n above and earth below,
 Immortal Gods and mortal men to know.
 So shalt thou learn what Pow'r does all controul,
 What bounds the parts, and what unites the whole:
 And rightly judge, in all this wondrous frame,
 How universal nature is the same.
 So shalt thou ne'er thy vain affections place
 On hopes of what shall never come to pass.

Man

Man, wretched man, thou shalt be taught to know,
 Who bears within himself the inborn cause of woe.
 Unhappy race! that never yet could tell
 How near their good and happiness they dwell.
 Depriv'd of sense, they neither hear nor see,
 Fetter'd in vice, they seek not to be free,
 But stupid to their own sad fate agree.
 Like pond'rous rolling stones, oppress'd with ill,
 The weight that loads 'em makes 'em roll on still,
 Bereft of choice, and freedom of the will.
 For native strife in ev'ry bosom reigns,
 And secretly an impious war maintains:
 Provoke not THIS, but let the combat cease,
 And ev'ry yielding passion sue for peace.
 Would'st thou, great Jove, thou Father of mankind,
 Reveal the *demon* for that task assign'd,
 The wretched race an end of woes would find.

And yet be bold, O man, divine thou art,
 And of the Gods celestial essence part.

Man

D

Nor

Nor sacred nature is from thee conceal'd,
 But so thy race her mystick rules reveal'd.
 These if to know thou happily attain,
 Soon shalt thou perfect be in all that I ordain.
 Thy wounded soul to health thou shalt restore,
 And free from ev'ry pain she felt before.

Abstain, I warn, from meats unclean and foul,
 So keep thy body pure, so free thy soul;
 So rightly judge; thy reason, so, maintain;
 Reason which heav'n did for thy guide ordain,
 Let that best reason ever hold the rein.

Then if this mortal body thou forsake,
 And thy glad flight to the pure aether take,
 Among the Gods exalted shalt thou shine,
 Immortal, incorruptible, divine;
 The tyrant Death securely shalt thou brave,
 And scorn the dark dominion of the grave.

F I N I S.

